

A  
L E T T E R

TO THE

Reverend Dr. F R E E,

BY THE

Rev. THOMAS JONES, A.M.

Chaplain of ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK,

With proper AFFIDAVITS.

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*Doth our Law judge any Man before it hear him and  
know what he doeth. JOHN vii. 51.*

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The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

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L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LIX.

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174  
260





REVEREND SIR,

**A**S you have laid a very heavy Charge against Me in your late Publications; you will not be surprized at hearing from Me in this Manner. I had, indeed, determined to take no Notice of your unkind Treatment of Me, because I was persuaded the Public would plainly see that your Accusation carried its own Answer with it.

But I have heard lately, that I have incurr'd the Censure of many Persons for the Crimes You accuse Me of, and that My Silence in the Matter is looked upon as an Argument of my Guilt.—The Respect I owe the Publick, and the Justice due to Myself, have determined me to send You the following Pages, in Order to wipe off the black Aspersions You have cast upon Me.

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Before I enter upon my Defence, I would premise that it is not my Design to engage at all in the Disputes, now depending between Yourself and your Antagonists : Controversy was ever my Aversion, and it is with Reluctance I embark in this. I am sorry Your own Conduct has made it necessary for Me to place You in such a Light, as must sensibly hurt You with every benevolent and humane Mind. The Dispute between Us lies in a very narrow Compass, and my only Task is to prove my Innocence of the Charge You have brought against Me. And this, I thank GOD, I can very easily and safely do.

You charge Me \* with forging Mr. *Hayward's* Letter, and then publishing it ; first to the Congregation from the Pulpit, and then to the Publick from the Press, as an Epistle I myself had received from the Regions of Bliss. A very heavy Charge this,

\* Rules for the Discovery of false Prophets, p. 9. Note, and Appendix, Number 2.

Sir,

## ( 5 )

Sir, which ought to be well supported. But instead of the Proof (a Point You are unhappily deficient in; not only in this, but in other Instances;) your own single Assertion is all the Authority you produce. But to the Point: In order to clear Myself of this Imputation; I shall first state the Case simply and plainly as it stands, and then confirm what I advance, by such Authorities, as You, Sir, must be convinced, are weighty and decisive.

The late Rev. Mr. *Hayward* was a Dissenting Minister, (well known in the City of *London*) with whom I had the Happiness to be acquainted. Towards the Close of his last Illness it was, (Oh! May You and I be as happy when the Time of our Departure shall be at Hand!) In this awful Season it was, that He wrote the Letter which has since made much Noise, and gave it a Friend with an Injunction to send it (but not till after *His* Decease) to Mr. *Pearson*, a Linnen-Draper in

*Cheapside*, with whom He had preserved a very intimate Friendship. Accordingly, soon after Mr. *Hayward's* Decease, Mr. *Pearson* received the said Letter, and was not a little surprized by the kind Artifice his departed Pastor had used, in order to convey such spiritual Advice and Comfort to Him. This Letter I saw, and procured a Copy of, (except what contained Matter of Private Business,) which Copy agrees with that in your Pamphlet, with this immaterial Exception, that the Word *Fido* is inserted in Yours and the other printed Copies, instead of Mr. *Pearson's* Christian Name which was in the Original. I own this Letter affected Me when I read it, and I thought it would not be amiss to read it to my Hearers from the Pulpit, hoping it might animate them in the Pursuit of that Happiness and Comfort in a trying Hour Mr. *Hayward* seemed so full of. I introduced it, therefore, in the following Manner.

I took



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I took Occasion to speak of the great Supports and solid Comforts real Religion inspires, more especially against the Fear of Death; and then told the Congregation, I had an Instance of the Truth of the above Observation in My Hand (meaning the aforesaid Copy;) I told Them, it was wrote by a Minister of my Acquaintance in the near and certain Prospect of Death, and in short, I related every Circumstance, as I have mentioned above: As Numbers, who heard me, can bear Me Witness. I never gave the least Hint that I received it from a departed Spirit, (as I am accused of doing;) on the contrary, I told the *People distinctly* and plainly, that the Minister wrote it *before He died*, and gave it to a Friend to convey it to Mr. P. after *His* Decease. This, "GOD knoweth," is all I, have been guilty of as touching Mr. *Hayward's* Letter. And when 'tis considered how favourable a Reception Mrs. *Rowe's* Letters from the Dead to the Living have met

with from Persons of all Ranks, Dr. *Free* might, surely, have pass'd it by, at least but slightly censur'd it as a pardonable Crime.

You charge Me too, with printing it. I solemnly declare, I knew nothing of its being printed. Had I entertained the least Expectation of it, I should never have read the Letter from the Pulpit. I had no Hand directly or indirectly in the printing, I was only concerned in reading it. This, I own, and acknowledge was a very great, though well meant, Indiscretion. *Si id peccare est, fateor id quoque.* But does not the Punishment exceed the Offence? Allowing that I was guilty of a Folly and Indiscretion in reading the Letter, yet it does by no Means amount to what You, Sir, have laid against Me. Forgery, and Imposture, are the Crimes You charge Me with; and, taking my Guilt for granted, you pass Sentence \* upon Me accordingly. How

\* Dr. *Free's* Edition of Mr. *Wesley's* Letter, p. 25, & 26.

greatly

greatly must Dr. *Free* be concerned when He reflects, that all This is absolutely false and groundless.

To prove that I did not forge the Letter, I refer You to the following Affidavits:

### N U M B E R I.

*J*AMES Pearson, of *Cheapside*, in the Parish of St. *Michael Le Querne*, Linnen-Draper, maketh Oath, and saith, that He, this Deponent, was at *Lymington*, in the County of *Southampton*, in the Month of *July*, 1757; and then and there, did see and converse with, the late Rev. Mr. *Samuel Hayward*, who was at that Time, and had been for a long Time before, in a very ill State of Health. And as this Deponent was conversing with the said *Samuel Hayward*, among other Things the said *Samuel Hayward* said, if I should die, I have left a Letter for You to be delivered to You after my Decease. And this Deponent farther

ther faith; that after the Decease of the said Mr. *Hayward*, which happened about three Weeks after the said Conversation, He, this Deponent received a Letter by the Post from a Relation of the said Mr. *Hayward's*, then at *Pool*, in *Dorsetshire*, which inclosed another Letter signed *Samuel Hayward*. Which last mentioned Letter this Deponent verily believes to be the proper Hand-Writing of the said *Samuel Hayward*; He, the said Deponent, having many Times seen Him write, and corresponded with Him many Years before his Death; and which said Letter is the same in Substance with that which is published in a certain late Pamphlet, said to be written by the Rev. Dr. *Free*, there being no other Alteration than in the proper Name of the Person to whom it was addressed. And which said Letter the Rev. Mr. *Jones* is charged to have read in the Pulpit of St. *Saviour's*, *Southwark*.

LONDON. Sworn

Jan. 19, 1759, before me

R. LADBROKE.

*James Pearson.*

N U M-

## NUMBER II.

*EDWARD Webber*, of *Leadenhall-street*, in the Parish of *St. Peter's Cornhill*, Stationer, maketh Oath and faith, that He, this Deponent, on or about the thirtieth of *July 1757*, was at the Funeral of the Rev. Mr. *Samuel Hayward*, together with Mr. *James Pearson*, of *Cheapside*, Linen-Draper. And this Deponent farther faith, that as He was returning from the said Funeral, in Company with the said Mr. *Pearson*, the said Mr. *Pearson* told this Deponent, that He had received from *Pool*, in *Dorsetshire*, a Letter, which the said late Mr. *Hayward* told Him He would leave for Him at his Decease; and the said Mr. *Pearson* did then and there deliver into the Hands of this Deponent a certain Letter, signed *Samuel Hayward*; and which said Letter this Deponent read, and this Deponent does verily believe the said Letter to be the proper Hand-Writing of the said late Mr.



Mr. *Hayward*; He, this Deponent, having often seen the said Mr. *Hayward* write, and having often corresponded with him by Letter. And this Deponent farther saith, that the said Letter is the same in Substance with That which is published in a certain late Pamphlet, said to be written by the Rev. Dr. *Free*, save only the Alteration of the Name of the Person to whom the said Letter is addressed; and which the Rev. Mr. *Jones* is charged to have read in the Pulpit of St. *Saviour's Southwark*.

## MIDDLESEX.

Sworn Jan. 19, 1759.

*Edward Webber.*

Before THOMAS QUARRELL.

This, Sir, I presume, acquits me of the Forgery. I have the original Letter in my Hands, and am ready to produce it to Yourself, or any Gentleman who desires that Satisfaction.

The next Article I am to clear Myself of, is the endeavouring to make the People believe

believe that I received this Letter from the "Mansions above". The following Affidavit will, I doubt not, be satisfactory to every unprejudic'd Mind.

### NUMBER III.

*WILLIAM Collison*, of *St. Olave's, Southwark*, Brewer; *Henry Adam*, of *St. Saviour's Southwark*, Hosier; *James Roberts*, of the Parish of *St. Saviour's Southwark*, Coal-Merchant; severally make Oath and say.

And first, this Deponent, *William Collison*, for Himself, saith, that sometime in the Month of *August*, in the Year 1757, as this Deponent believes, he was at the Parish Church of *St. Saviour's Southwark*, and did then and there hear a Sermon from the Rev. Mr. *Thomas Jones*, one of the Chaplains of the said Parish; during which, He, the said Deponent did hear the said Mr. *Jones* read a certain Paper, the Contents of which are, as near as this Deponent can recollect,

collect, the same in substance with that which this Deponent has since seen in a certain Pamphlet, said to be written by the Rev. Dr. *Free*. And this Deponent farther saith, that he did not hear the said Mr. *Jones* use any Expressions in Order to induce the Auditory to believe that He, the said Mr. *Jones*, thought the Contents of the said Paper came from the other World, or to persuade any Person then present that it did : But this Deponent saith, that the Manner in which the said Mr. *Jones* introduced the reading of the said Paper, was as follows : After speaking of the Comforts true Religion will afford Persons in a dying Condition, and the Happiness of a firm Persuasion of future Bliss ; He, the said Mr. *Jones*, then holding a Paper in his Hand, said, He could produce an Instance of it in a Person lately deceased, who was a faithful Minister of *Christ* ; and who left behind Him a Letter to be delivered to a Friend after his Decease ; a Copy whereof, He, Mr. *Jones*, said, He had in his Hand ; with these or the like Expressions, He, the said Mr. *Jones*, introduced the Reading of the said Letter ; and this Deponent farther saith, that the  
said

said Mr. *Jones*, either before or after Reading the said Letter as aforesaid, did not, to this Deponent's Knowledge or Belief, make Use of any Expressions to any other Purpose than as aforesaid. And the said *Henry Adam* and *James Roberts* do, for themselves, say, that They were present with the said *William Collison*, at the Time and Place aforesaid; and that they do verily believe that what the said *William Collison* has above sworn is strictly true.

SURRY.

Sworn this 18th Day of  
January, 1759. Before Me  
W. HAMMOND.

*William Collison,*

*Henry Adam,*

*James Roberts,*

You see, Sir, what I have offered in my Defence, depends not upon *My* single Authority, but is supported by Persons of undoubted Credit. Here then I rest the Matter. I think I have sufficiently purged Myself of the Crimes I am accused of, and am well assured You cannot, You are conscious to Yourself You cannot, disprove a single Article of what I have asserted. Plain Matter of Fact cannot be gainsaid nor refuted; and plain Matter of Fact is now brought in my Defence; and I leave the  
Pub-



Publick, (nay, may I not leave Your own Conscience?) to decide the Case between us. It were easy to make Reflections, but I forbear. I shall not take those Advantages Your Treatment gives Me, nor say any Thing of the Language You have used, only that I sincerely pity the Man that deals in it.—I wish Dr. *Free* would think coolly and calmly, how much better it would be to lend an helping Hand towards the promoting a Sense of Religion, which it hath pleased GOD of late to revive amongst us, than to oppose and persecute Men who have never injured *Him*, and whose sole Aim is the Glory of GOD, and the Good of Mankind. But, I have done. I forgive You from my very Soul. I believe, Your Prejudice, not your Heart, has made You treat Me thus. I pray GOD bless You in Time, and in Eternity; and am,

REVEREND SIR,

Your affectionate Servant in Christ Jesus,

St. Saviour's, Southwark,  
Jan. 16, 1759.

T. JONES.



